1. Introduction

SN Cormaic Naofa, situated in the village of Moygownagh, is a mixed, rural school. The school is under the patronage of the Catholic bishop of Killala. There are currently 49 pupils enrolled. The school has three mainstream class teachers and one shared learning-support teacher who is based in the school. It receives funding and the services of a shared home-school-community liaison teacher under the Delivering Equality of Opportunities in Schools (DEIS) initiative. The school had an incidental inspection in November 2010. The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

2. Summary of Findings and Recommendations for Further Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The following are the main strengths of the work of the school:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• The principal and staff have undertaken significant development of curriculum provision in recent months following an incidental inspection in November 2010.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The quality of the work of the board of management is very good. Responsibilities are effectively distributed and board members are aware of the school’s progress in relation to long-term targets.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The quality of the management of resources is very good as there is ongoing development of the school building and grounds. The school has recently developed a computer suite/library.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The quality of home-school communication is very good. The principal has established effective procedures for communicating with parents which includes an annual meeting and a school prospectus.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The quality of pupil management is very good. Pupils’ are respectful, polite and friendly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement across all subject areas is good.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The quality of the school self-evaluation process is very good. The results of such a process show very encouraging improvements, particularly in literacy and numeracy.</td>
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The following main recommendations are made:

| • It is recommended that differentiated learning targets for pupils with specific learning needs are explicitly planned by class teachers with less dependence on textbook content. Where necessary, pupils should be grouped by ability in literacy and Mathematics to maximise individual pupil attainment. |
| • It is recommended that programmes of work for pupils attending learning support/resource should be based on pupils’ diagnosed needs. To this end the school should source various diagnostic assessments to ensure pupils’ needs can be identified. |
| • It is recommended that a whole-school approach to writing is devised to ensure all classes are exposed to a range of writing genres with an emphasis on neat penmanship and presentation of work. |
• It is recommended that the school devises a clear early intervention programme for literacy and numeracy to accommodate the outcomes of infant diagnostic tests.

3. Quality of School Management

• The quality of the work of the board of management is very good. Responsibilities are effectively distributed. Board members are aware of the school’s progress regarding targets as set out in the school’s long-term plan.

• The quality of the work of the in-school management team is good. The principal and deputy principal work together effectively with a common vision. They have shown a capacity to develop various aspects of school life, both curricular and organisational, in recent months.

• The quality of the management of resources is very good. The school is very well resourced. The school has recently developed a computer suite/library. According to results of a questionnaire issued during the evaluation, all parents are satisfied with the school’s resources.

• The quality of the management of home-school communication is very good. The principal has established very effective procedures for communicating with parents. An annual meeting for all parents is held in September. A small prospectus with the school’s main plans and policies is issued to parents on enrolment.

• The quality of pupil management is very good. Pupils’ behaviour is of the highest standard. They are courteous, friendly and welcoming.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

• The quality of school planning is good. The quality of organisational policies is very good as they are concise, specific and context based. It is recommended that curricular plans feature the current good practices established in each subject and strive to adopt whole-school approaches in key areas.

• The quality of the school self-evaluation process is very good. The school has devised a long-term plan with specific targets. The results of such a process are very good and show encouraging improvements, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

• The quality of classroom planning differs between teachers. Where planning is of a very good quality teachers use specific learning objectives and plan for differentiated outcomes for individual pupils with learning needs. It is recommended that a whole-school approach to teacher planning is adopted.

Child protection policy and procedures

• School authorities provided evidence that, in compliance with Primary Circular 0061/2006, the board of management has formally adopted the Department’s Child Protection Guidelines for Primary Schools. Evidence was provided to show that these child protection procedures have been brought to the attention of management, school staff and parents; that a copy of the procedures has been provided to all staff (including all new staff); and that management has ensured that all staff are familiar with the procedures to be followed. A designated liaison person (DLP) and a deputy DLP have been appointed in line with the requirements of the guidelines.
5. Quality of Teaching, Learning and Pupil Achievement

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement is good. Individual practices differ significantly between teachers. The establishment of whole-school approaches in all curricular areas would benefit pupils. Teachers make very good use of information and communication technology. It is recommended that language and literacy skills are consistently developed across the curriculum. To maximise individual pupil attainment it is recommended that differentiated learning targets and materials for individual pupils or groups of pupils with different learning needs are provided.

- Tá cáilíocht an teagaisc agus na foghlama sa Ghaeilge go maith. Baineann na daltaí taitneamh as na himeachtaí a soláthraítear. Bionn siad in ann caint go leanúnach faoi réimse ábhar cé go bhfuil deacrachtaí acu fós le húsáid cruinn na mbriathra. Léann na daltaí go muiníneach. Glacann siad le tascanna scríofa éagsúla. Moltar, áfach, na tascanna a fhorbairt chu'n a chinntiú go bhfuil na daltaí in ann iad féin a chur in iúl go cruthaioch.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Irish is good. Pupils enjoy the range of activities provided. They are able to speak at length about a variety of topics despite having some difficulties with the accurate use of verbs. Pupils read confidently. They engage in different writing tasks. It is, however, recommended that such tasks are developed to ensure pupils can express themselves creatively.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English is good. The school places a praiseworthy emphasis on literacy initiatives such as *Literacy for fun* and shared reading. Class novels are used to very good effect. In reading and writing activities, it is recommended that differentiated learning targets for pupils with specific learning needs are explicitly planned by class teachers with less dependence on textbook content. Where necessary, pupils should be grouped by ability to maximise individual pupil attainment. A variety of approaches to writing is evident across the school. It is recommended that a whole-school approach to writing is devised to ensure all classes are exposed to a range of writing genres with an emphasis on neat penmanship and presentation of work.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Mathematics is good. The very good practices observed in individual classrooms included a strong focus on target vocabulary, pair work, mental maths and problem-solving. It is recommended that teachers differentiate tasks for individual pupils and, where necessary, group pupils by ability to maximise pupil attainment.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Visual Arts is good. Lessons are well organised and effectively structured. Teachers used a variety of effective stimuli for their lessons. Pupils display a sense of achievement and enjoyment. The school currently employs the services of an artist to teach the Visual Arts programme despite the staff having adequate knowledge, skills and training to present a broad and balanced curriculum. It is recommended that this arrangement is reviewed.

- The quality of assessment varies significantly from class to class and would benefit from a whole-school approach. Standardised tests are carried out on all pupils from first class to sixth class and the results are graphed, a practice which is commended. Two diagnostic tests are carried out on pupils in infant classes to ensure the early identification of difficulties. It is recommended that available assessment data be used to differentiate teaching for individual pupils. It is further recommended that additional
diagnostic tests are sourced to ensure that more effective programmes of work, based on pupils’ needs, can be devised.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

• The school avails of the services of a hard working and interested shared learning support/resource teacher. The overall quality of the service shows scope for development. While games and visual aids are used to support learning there is a need for more regular use of concrete materials.

• The quality of the individual education plans (IEP) has improved significantly since an incidental inspection in November. Parents are involved in the IEP process and are given a copy of the IEP. Mainstream class objectives frequently form the basis of a pupil’s programme. It is recommended that this is replaced by SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timed) targets based on the pupil’s diagnosed needs.

• The quality of outcomes and progression of pupils with special educational needs shows scope for development. All teachers are advised to differentiate class work for individual pupils with different learning needs. It is recommended that the school devise a clear early intervention programme for literacy and numeracy to accommodate the outcomes of infant diagnostic tests.

• The school also avails of the services of a shared home-school-community liaison teacher. The quality of provision is very good. There is significant engagement with parents through home visits and through the regular implementation of such programmes as Literacy for fun, Maths for fun and Science for fun. Feedback from parents during the course of the evaluation regarding these programmes was very positive.

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Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management
Area 1  Observations on the content of the inspection report

As a board and staff we are very pleased with the overall report. We feel that the report is a fair reflection of life and workings of the school and board.

Area 2  Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

- Following recommendations from the Inspector three teachers visited another primary school to observe the process used for the teaching of literacy. Using guidelines from this school we will be putting aspects of their approach to the teaching of literacy in place in September.
- We have reduced the reliance on textbooks in school. We will place a greater reliance on ICT, paired work and the environment as well as teacher-designed worksheets.
- At our recent staff meetings we have decided to review our curricular policies, so as to make them more concise and include working practices in the school.
- The learning-support teacher is in the process of sourcing diagnostic tests which will be put in use in the next school year, with an emphasis on early intervention.
- We are in the process of devising a whole-school approach to writing. We have decided on themes for each month under which we will promote good writing practices.
- The current practice of employing an artist to teach the Visual Arts Programme will be reviewed in consultation with the staff and parents.